

# The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, December 2. 1693.

**B**Eing Naturally inclined to Philosophy, (altho' I experience my own, together with my Sexes unfitness (partly through Weakness of our Constitution, but more especially Want of Learning) to make any considerable Progress in such kind of Studies) I must beg you would Oblige me with an Answer to the following Queries, and overlook small Faults, as false Spelling, which is Natural to our Sex:

Quest. 1. *Is Air a Body?*

Ans. Yes.

Quest. 2. *If a Body, after what manner rarified and condensed?*

Ans. By a greater or less Motion, Motion ferments and separates the Parts of Matter, through want of Motion, their *Vis Centripeta* the Pressure of the Atmosphere, or both, causes a Subsiding, and by consequence a Condensation or Coagulation of the looser parts.

Quest. 3. *Whether composed of Globose Atoms?*

Ans. What their Composition is, We want a greater Assistance to our sight than the finest Microscopes can afford us, or the most delicate Touch discover; nay, perhaps were they more obvious than they are now, we should be at a loss to Answer the Question; for even Water it self, which is more discernable to our Eye and Touch, is not yet discovered as to its Composition. All the Answer this Question admits of is, that it's much more probable that the Particles of Air are long and hamous, and very stiff, because of their Springiness and Elastick Powers, which is so evident in the Air-Gun, and in those many Experiments that have been made in Exhausted Receivers.

Quest. 4. *If so, whether such Atoms have an Elastick quality?*

Ans. Yes.

Quest. 5. *When the Circumambient Air is drawn from a small Globule, why does it expand it self so as to fill the empty space? If you say, Because Nature abhors a Vacuum*

Ans. Nature neither loves nor abhors a Vacuum, but does always more or less admit one, or there could be no such thing in Nature as Motion; but the Reason of a Globule of Air, or a Foot-ball's expanding it self, sometimes is from a greater or less Pressure of the Atmosphere, when the Atmosphere presses hard upon Globules, the Air within those Globules being not able to make a proportionable Counterpressure, must be forced to Contract it self in lesser room; but when the Atmosphere makes a less Pressure upon the Globule, the Air within overpowers the Resistance without, and by consequence expands it self.

Quest. 7. — *Then I desire to know how a Body can (without a Void, or overthrowing that part of the Common Definition of Matter, viz. Impenetrability) supply that place that will contain a hundred times the quantity of the same kind of Body?*

Ans. This is answered in the last.

Quest. 7. *Is there not a Void or Vacuum in the Center of each of those Globose Bodies, which increases or decreases in space as the extrems of the Globule is rare or dense?*

Ans. No, the Vacuum is not in the Center, but interspers'd throughout the whole.

The Person that sent these Questions is desired to send us word how a Letter may be directed to her, and she shall have the rest answered in a little time.

Quest. 8. *Whether in the Resurrection we shall rise in the same State as we dye, either of Infancy, Childhood or Manhood?*

Ans. We have not yet experienc'd that, and therefore till then cannot return a positive Answer, only thus far, 'tis generally suppos'd by Divines and Schoolmen that we shall rise at perfect Age, or about those Years that our Saviour suffer'd in, viz. when he was Thirty three Years old.

Quest. 9. *Whether any Dayes be in themselves Ominous and Unfortunate, according to the Opinion of the Romans, who had their Fasti and Nefasti, their lucky and unlucky Days? and particularly, Whether it be not a Superstitious Observation in most Persons not to Attempt any Business of Consequence upon a Childermas or Innocents-day, because Affairs undertaken on that Day have frequently miscarried?*

Ans. Whether there's more Folly or Impiety in such Observations, is the greatest Riddle; St. Paul seems to despair of some of his Hearers, telling 'em, *Ye observe Dayes and Times, &c.* I'm afraid I have bestowed upon you Labour in vain.

Quest. 10. *Whether we may conclude any Certainty in the Presages of Gypsies, since the Event so frequently Answers the Prediction?*

Ans. The same as in other probable Conjectures made by any Body else; but as for their telling what has happened to Persons (in order to gain a Belief what shall happen) 'tis done by Combination, or Enquiries afore-hand, they having their Creatures and Messengers who go before and get an Account of every thing, against they have occasion to use it.

Quest. 11. *Whether a suddain Bleeding at the Nose be Ominous to a Person that was never, or for many Tears troubled with it before?*

Ans. Stuff! Eternal Stuff! 'tis a Wonder such People don't admire they have Blood in their Veins, having not seen it for some Years.

Quest. 12. *Whether the Christian and Sir-name beginning with the same Letter denotes the Person fortunate?*

Ans. Nothing near so much as it betokens the Observers to be Fools, and so perhaps make good Proverb, *Lucky Fool.*

Quest. 13. *What is it in all Apparitions that assumes the Airy Vehicle, whether the Soul of the Body it represents, or some other good or evil Spirit? and whether it be proper to speak to such an Apparition? and what is best to be said to it?*

Ans. Really Sir, We must Confess our Ignorance, We keep no Correspondence with Departed Spirits, and know as little of their Nature as those that have no being; We can only Answer in the Negative, *They are not so, and so;* those that are inquisitive into their Nature, and are at a loss what Questions to ask 'em when they appear, seem to be very forgetful of their Inclinations, since nothing would satisfy more than to ask 'em such Questions as they want to be resolved in.

Quest. 14. *I have it from a Person of good Integrity, that the Genius of a Lady yet alive was seen by her whilst the living Person was remote, I desire to know what it is that actuates this Apparition, and whether it presages the Death of the Living Person whom it represents?*

Ans. It has been generally believ'd (and perhaps not without very good Reason) that every one, especially every good Person, has a Tutelary or Guardian Angel, to attend him, and which does sometimes admonish



monish him for the avoiding of Dangers, and discovering of Futurities, and 'tis fairly gather'd from several Expressions in Scripture, viz. such as these, *Their Angels do always behold the Face of my Father, &c. They are sent forth as Ministering Spirits to such as shall be Heirs of Salvation, &c.* which is all we can say to the Question.

**Quest. 15.** *Whether all Persons that marry are by an unavoidable Fate laid out for each other? the Negative seems most agreeable to that Liberty of Will that Mankind seems to have in all Civil Actions, whilst the Affirmative carries some probability, since we see the most likely Matches often defeated, and the most improbable as frequently effected?*

**Ans.** We rather think not, not only from the aforesaid Reason, but also from the many Unlawful Marriages that are Consummated in the World: Suppose the same Question had been put for the Getting of Children, and amongst them Bastards, we may not think that God Almighty is the Author of Sin. In short, to speak safely, that we have a Natural Freedom and Liberty is certain, and that God does often over-rule it for his Glory, and the carrying on the great Business of Universal Providence, and with respect to the whole Universe at once, is very certain. The best way in such Cases is, rather to endeavour to do ones Duty, and leave the Disposal of things so far to God Almighty, as to believe he does superintend over the World, and acts as before.

**Quest. 16.** *Whether a Conjugal or single Estate be best?*

**Ans.** St. Paul has given a better Answer already than we pretend to, viz. *'Tis better to Marry than burn,* tho' such as Marry shall have more Care and Trouble than a Continent single Person.

**Quest. 17.** *Whether a Maid or Widdow is to be more easily Courted? and what different Measures must be taken by a Wooer in his Addresses to either?*

**Ans.** A Widdow by all means; but general Rules are impossible to be given for every one, unless all were of the same Temper and Sense.

**Quest. 18.** *Of late Years I have followed the Trade of a Pawn-broker, but dealt most in the Reign of King James, and did usually lend Money upon any thing that came to hand, and very often Stolen to my knowledge; and likewise to Persons of Qualities Servants on rich Cloaths, when in my Conscience I knew they were too Valuable for their Perquisites. By these ways and means, with the exorbitant Interest that attends the Trade, I have got some Money, and have now left off this unjust Occupation, and fell into other business. You hear my Case, and I desire to know, Whether these above be Sins? if so, of what dye? and which way I ought or may make my Peace before I leave this transitory life, whether by Restitution, according to Christ, or Justice, or by any Sacrifice to the Power above? In Answering of this you will highly satisfy a Troubled Conscience, and save a Wicked Liver from laying Violent Hands on himself?*

**Ans.** This Question is Useful to be Published, for a Caution to Persons to take Care of their Servants Honesty, &c. But in Answer, if you know of particular Cheats, Extortions, &c. you ought and must make particular Restitution, or expect no Salvation; if you know only in general, you ought not to throw away your Money, but make the

best Use of it you can in Charity, &c. and lead such a Pious good Life as may evidence your Repentance and bring you Peace.

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